

Buxton: a Black Utopia in the Heartland

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followed in order to obtain funding from Carnegie, and the use of libraries to foster civic pride.

Even though it deals more with community history than architectural history, this book belongs on the shelf next to *Buildings of Iowa*, by Gebhard and Mansheim (1993), and *The Carnegie Library in Illinois*, by Bial and Bial (1991). Because Iowa received 99 public library Carnegie grants (fourth in number behind Indiana, California, and Illinois), these libraries had and continue to have a strong influence in Iowa. With so many Carnegie libraries still standing in Iowa's downtown cores, many will welcome the chance to flip through this book's pages and see how the visual presence of a "Carnegie" has contributed to the life of their community.

Buxton: A Black Utopia in the Heartland, by Dorothy Schwieder, Joseph Hraba, and Elmer Schwieder. Expanded edition. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003. xx, 256 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Hal Chase is an instructor of history at Des Moines Area Community College. He is a coauthor of *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838-2000* (2001).

Buxton: A Black Utopia in the Heartland is a reprint of *Buxton: Work and Racial Equality in a Coal Mining Community* (1987). The only addition is an introduction emphasizing the people who wrote the Buxton story with their lives.

"From all perspectives," the authors write, "Buxton must be considered a success story for blacks" [and whites] (218). "For residents of Buxton, life began and ended with the Consolidation Coal Company" (88), and "its parent company, the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, served as the sovereign power" (212). The United Mine Workers (UMW) was another power, as was the family, the YMCA, the company store, and the dozen churches that existed in Buxton.

The Buxton story began with Consolidation's purchase of Muchakinock in 1881 and its recruitment of black men in Virginia. Consolidation reached its peak in Buxton and its end with the closing of the mines in Haydock in 1927. But from 1900 to 1910, Buxton was "A Kind of Heaven" (viii). Chapters on The Creation of a Community, Workers, Consolidation Coal Co., Family Life, and Ethnicity employ census and company records, articles from *The Iowa Bystander*, recollections gleaned from 75 interviews, and personal photographs of many of those same people to document the truth of that vision.

That such racial integration and civility existed during the height of segregation, disfranchisement, and lynching makes the Buxton story one of national and international significance. People with different histories and identities did live in unusual harmony. The reasons include a corporation whose policies "at least paralleled welfare capitalism" (112); two extraordinary top executives, John and Ben Buxton (father and son); a progressive labor union, the UMW; and a colorful cast of thousands who demonstrated that given good wages, equal opportunity, and the freedom to control their own religious, economic, social, and political institutions, people were capable of creating the just, vibrant, fulfilling, and sustaining community that was and is the elusive American Dream. This reprint will extend that dream and point to possibilities of expanding it through new research into John and Ben Buxton, the records of the Chicago & North Western railroad, social class, the white population of Buxton, and the culture of the state, because it seems more than coincidence that this "Kind of Heaven" happened in Iowa.

From Catharine Beecher to Martha Stewart: A Cultural History of Domestic Advice, by Sarah A. Leavitt. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002. xiii, 250 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

Reviewer Jane Simonsen is assistant professor of English studies at the University of Central Arkansas Honors College. Her dissertation (in American Studies at the University of Iowa in 2001) was "Making Home Work: Race, Gender, and the Uses of American Domestic Space, 1850-1910."

Martha Stewart's recent conviction may draw readers to Sarah Leavitt's *From Catharine Beecher to Martha Stewart*, but those looking for the dish on Stewart should look elsewhere. Instead, readers will find that Beecher and Stewart function as bookends in a history of domestic advice manuals. That history examines American women's enduring fascination with the dream of an ideal home. Leavitt demonstrates not only that the worlds within the pages of home manuals and magazines were the "stuff of fantasy," but also that domestic fantasies provide insight into American women's changing anxieties, innovations, and aspirations from the 1850s to the end of the twentieth century (5).

In extolling the moral virtues of durable carpets, denigrating draperies for harboring disease, and offering tips on the use of boxes as furniture in immigrant homes, advice-givers were recommending nothing less than the transformation of American society. Leavitt proposes that women's fascination with such manuals is driven in part by homemakers' desires to participate in conversations about an ideal

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